

Answering Amanda

by Jay Mountney
(and Moth)



Introduction

After it was all over, we found a bundle of letters wrapped in an empty crisp packet (the kind that holds six or more individual packets of crisps) stuffed down a disused rabbit hole. Pieced together with the letters (and gifts) Amanda had saved, they told the story of that spring and summer.

To begin at the very beginning, Amanda was the youngest in a group of sisters and cousins who moved to a huge shared house right at the foot of Werneth Low, where the countryside meets the town. Their parents and grandparents were busy turning the house into a fabulous family home, and the outbuildings into a restaurant and craft centre. This left most of the youngsters free to enjoy themselves, although gradually the older ones got involved in the business. Amanda was enchanted by the gardens and became convinced that there must be fairies. So she wrote to them and left the letter where she was sure they would find it.

After some time, during which Amanda alternately hoped and despaired, (and the fairies presumably conquered their nerves), the correspondence published here began. It ended quite abruptly, when the business expanded too much for fairy sensitivities, as explained in the letters.

The whole thing was too wonderful to be kept just for the family, and we decided to edit the letters and share them with the world. When I say "edit", we have not altered the letters themselves, but some of the inks and papers could not be reproduced easily. However, the colours have been copied as far as possible. The spelling remains exactly as Amanda and Moth wrote. So does the punctuation. It would appear that neither learnt from the other!

First Contact

Amanda's first letter was written in purple gel pen on fairy-themed notepaper. She left it under a brick in the wilder part of the garden.

Dear the fairys at the bottom of the garden my room is full
of fairy stuff so I belvied in you and your friends
because I Love fairys and I wanted to send you a letter
please write back. Love Amanda



Moth replied using green gel pen on circus-themed notepaper which she must have got at the local goblin market.

Dear Miss Amanda,

My name is Moth. I am the best ~~high~~ ~~rit~~ riter so the rest asked me to rite. We liked getting your letter. We don't get many. But the brick was very ~~div~~ ~~diff~~ hard. You should have

seen us. Fox had to help. Next time put it in a pollythin bag and hang it on a tree. Here is a peg.

Your room sounds nice but we are skerd of big houses so we won't see it. But we reeched the letterbox. We stood on each other like this: I was at the top. We ~~prak prag practst~~ did it a lot after we saw it at the fairy circus in the big Top under Werneth Low. I got this paper there too. I got :: sheets.

There are ::: Of us living at the bottom of the garden. Our names are Columbine, and Cobweb, and Willow, and Harlequin and Briony and me (Moth) and Peasblossom.

We like the garden better since you came to live here. We like the hens and rabbits.

We trie to cont roll Fox but sumtimes he is really wild. We do trie.

If it gets very cold we ~~higher hyoun~~ go to sleep till it get warmer. Do you do that? The hens' fethers make nice stuffing for our covers.

Everybody sends a lot of love and fairy kisses as well as the peg.

Your-fiend/freind/frend,

Moth

XXXXXXX

P.S. I'm not sure how to spell the fr-----d word so I've spelt it a lot of ways. Maybe you know. We are so good at fairy spelling that we're no good at word spelling. I wish I could fairy spell the words! But we can't grant our own wishes.

There were some enclosures - possibly leaves or petals – (Amanda has forgotten) – and a clothes peg. Moth was clearly attempting to conform to Amanda's human conceptions about fairies as very small people.



Penfriends.

Amanda replied on fairy notepaper again, using green gel pen and enclosing a marble and a glass 'pebble'.

Dear Moth, columbine ,cobweb,harlequin and. Briony and
peasblossom

I liked your letter I enjoyed reading it it was great to find out what
you

were called and thanks for the presents I went to the circus too.
Now you will too. Now you will find out how to spell. best wishes
Love am



There was a note on the envelope to the effect that something - the note, or the marble or the pebble - would help Moth to spell.

It isn't clear what was meant by 'Now you will too'. One wonders if Willow was hurt at being left out but the twins were so young at the time it's unlikely he was aware of the letters. There was also a 10p piece in the envelope but it was not mentioned and may have been placed in the wrong envelope by Moth.

She answered using pink gel pen on more circus paper and enclosed a button as well as returning the peg.

Dear Miss Amanda,

Thank you. The bag and peg were good. Hear is the peg bak for next time. We played marble

and Cobweb won and he says he gets to keep the marble and Peasblossom says that

is just ~~tip~~ ~~typick~~ like a boy.

Did your circus have mouses riding dandy lions? And vole jugglers. Ours did. And their was a brave young toad on a flying trapeeez.

Abowt spelling. The thing is, Miss Amanda, as fairies get better at fairy spelling.thay

get worse at word spelling. I don't no why. Stuff just happens. And we are getting good at fairy spelling. I am up to moths and butterflys. Cobweb can do spyders

and has started on catkins. You can look for them when the whether ~~impru~~ gets better.

Cobweb says moths are easier than catkins but I don't agree becos moths flutter and catkins only flutter if it's windy and also to do moths you haf to do catterpillers first. But I carnt do spy-ders. Willow and Briony are too little to do spelling yet.

Columbine and Harlequin are teenage fairies and they don't bother with spelling mutch.

They both just mooch abowt. Columbine got good at flours last summer but you carn't reed her righting.

Peasblossom is our big sister and she looks after us all and she says she dusn't have time for anything else, espeshally spelling (eether kind). I don't no why.

She says the wether ::cast is bad so I have to stop and go and collect chicken feathers.

The thing is, Miss Amanda, fairies freeze eezily so we have to be cairful.

Love from everybody, espeshally Moth

XXXXXXX

pea. s. we found some buttons on the way back from Werneth Low. We don't youse them - only to be ~~dekr~~ ~~deek~~ pritty so you can have . of them.



Moth was obviously oblivious to the spelling, both fairy and human, of her older siblings. She was also probably fantasising about the circus entertainments although it's possible the adult fairies spelled various acts for the children.

Amanda responded in blue ink on fairy notepaper. A tiny thimble and miniature key were enclosed.

Dear the fairys

I am 7. I like ~~hore~~ horses I wish I had one but we have not
got anoth money. I have got a book that shows you how to spell
I am going to lend it to you. My birthday is on August the 18th.
Now I will tell you about my house. My house is big all my room is
covered with fairy's. I have lots of cousins. I have learn't to all the
joined up letters. I have two dogs. They are called Doug and Sandy.
can you tell the fox to not eat the rabbits because it makes me sad.
My favourite colour is pink what is yours?

Love from

Ama your dearest friend XXXXX

write soon



Moth's third letter was written in pink gel pen on circus paper. The gel pen writing must have been hard to read but Moth and Amanda didn't seem to mind.

Dear Miss Amanda,

My favrit culer is pink two. Peasblossom says thank you for the vase but it won't stand up.

I will keep it with my secret things. But Miss Amanda, sumbody found my ~~see~~ secret things and

took my buttuns. I don't think it was Fox. I have still got the glass pretty and the penny.

Cobweb had the marble but he played marble with Goosegrass and lost. So now Goosegrass has the

marble over in Gee Cross. Miss Amanda, I found a packet that said crisps but it was empty. Sum. ate

the crisps and through it away. That is BAD, Badder than Fox cos thay shud no better. But I stuffed the

feathers in it and it was very cosy in the big cold. Harlequin got caught out up on Werneth Low and had

to spend the cold in a rabbit hole. I have seen yore .. dog foxes. One is big and fat and smelly - we call him Dog. The other is new and little and black and sqair. We call him Sqair. Witch is witch? (I didn't know if you new about them. I'm glad thay ar tame).

We went to the goblin market under Werneith Low. Peasblossom did a lot of swopping. I swopt my crisp paket for a lucky pencil :: U. The goblins spelled it and if you take kair it cud spell yor dreams. I think. We do swopping cos we don't kepe stuff much. We don't have stoaredj. Do you? Pleez kepe yore pencil - don't swop it.

Miss Amanda, I can't spell Fox. I think he is lerjik to spelling. He dus wot I want when he wants to. Are your foxes like that? I am sad about the rabbits two.

Miss Amanda, I don't want to spell words. If I cud I wudn't be able to spell catterpillers and I wud rather spell cattapillas. They tickle. Love from all the fairies, speshly Moth.

PS wot is a birthday?

Note that the coin was mentioned. The envelope, which was not a circus one (but was decorated with hand drawn flowers) had a further note, also in pink:

pps it is a purrpilling pencil to and fro. Don't scru it too much or you will brek the spell.

ppps I am pragtisink joynd letters like you. I will trie next thyme. Cobweb dusn't try - his righting is ORFULL. He says nice righting and pink are sissy.



The next communication arrived unexpectedly, before Amanda had had a chance to reply.

It came in time for Valentine's Day and was in totally different (and rather scruffy) handwriting in black felt-tip pen on cream notepaper. The envelope, which was pink, had 'Miss Amanda. Privut' on it. There were some heart-shaped buttons enclosed.

Deer miss manda thees ar :: yoo :: saturday

I luv yoo miss manda
ps doan't tell moth About the buttons
From yor valentine
gess hoo!



After the Valentine.

Amanda's response was instant; she wasn't going to let her new friend think she condoned theft.

The envelope was addressed to 'Moth only private' with a note indicating that the buttons were enclosed. The letter was written in very careful joined up writing, in pencil, on fairy notepaper

Dear Moth and friends

Guess what I have had a tooth fallen out. A birthday is a day when you were born. I know who took your buttons Cobweb he used them to ~~ta~~ make a valem times day for a letter for me.

Love from Ama



Moth wrote back in purple gel pen on circus paper and copied Amanda's style of joined up writing.

Dear Miss Amanda,

You can kepe the butuns. I wud hav scent them to you evenshly eniway but . bi . . But Cobweb is in big trubble and he nose and if he ever gets another marble he ose it me and he says he doesunt kare becos it was :: you and he luvs you - well we all luv you but we doant all tayk uther fairies' butuns.

Fox fownd yor letter witch is a gud job as I wud never have looked their. Wot happened to our peg? Can you get anuther? I have lookt and lookt but no body has dropt any.

You still havunt toled us about yor room and your fether cozies and yor storje. And yor foxes.

This is ower lasst ~~pe~~ ~~pea~~ bit of cirkus pay per but when we go to the fair I will look for some nu payper.

Their was a box in the garden Miss Amanda and we tried it but really Miss Amanda fairies sleep best in trees. I don't know wye. But you are very kind. Also Peaseblossom says we don't want to keep stuff so we don't need store edge and store edge is stuff too. Fox keeps my stuff and since the buttuns he dusnt even show me whare it is.

Miss Amanda, I have to tell you sumthing. I am sorry but I am glad you can't have horses. They are very big and cud stand on a fairy without meening to. Columbine likes baby ponies but she is always showing off and Peaseblossom says one day she will get studdon. I think she is just pre tending - there are no baby ponies hear anyway and if there wer I bet sheed be as fry freye skered as me.

Love from everybody speshly Moth (and Cobweb)

P.S. I spelled krokusses and thay are EVERIWARE!!!

P.P.S Whare did your tooth fall out and do you wont us : luke :: it ? Will it stik bak?



Even Moth couldn't pretend to sleep in a smallish cardboard box...

The following appeared on the back of the envelope:

PPPs. I don't know if I was born. If you were born how can you have another birth day? Will you get born agen? Will yu be the saym next time? When is August? Also did you like the pensul?

Amanda used black biro this time, though the greeting was in green. She wrote on puppy-themed paper with drawings of Moth by Amanda on back. Tiny dolphin charms and a miniature bracelet were enclosed.

Dear Moth

thankyou for the buttons back that was very kind. Well Cobweb is just bieng a tipicle teenager and I love cobweb back.

I will just get a ordanary peg and decorate it with nice patterns andI will keep it safe.

I don't ~~tu~~ sleep ~~in~~ with a feather I have a bed with a mattress on. My bedroom is a got lots of toys and books I have got o two books about fairys so I know quite a lot about you. We call the foxes dogs ~~the black sq~~ Squair is called Doug and Dog is called Sandy.

We made the box for you to keep all your stuff in there or maybe I will put the box in ~~the~~ a tree.

I absoloutley love horses and there is a baby pony around here.

When your tooth falls out you don't loose it and in the night you pu it under your pillow which a place where you put your head at night then in the middle of the night the tooth fairy comes and turns your tooth into a pound or fifty pea then ~~after wards~~ about half a year later yo a new adult tooth would grow.

No where you have a birthday you just celebrate when you were born and you grow a year older and you have it on the same date as you ~~was~~ were born.

Oh yes, I loved your pencil I have been very careful with it.

I went swimming witch is where you swim in water and we did a race and I won and got a medal.

Love From Ama XXXX



On the back of the envelope, Amanda printed in pencil:

p.s. me and my cousin Lorna have got a ~~the~~ thew presents for you to keep.

p.s.I have put a good luck charm necklace for you

Meanwhile, Cobweb wrote again (with more buttons) on music-themed paper in dark blue pen.

*Dear Miss Manda I am Sorree about The
buTTons and I love you even tho yOu toled but
hoNestli I fownd thees myself - bU I am soRee they
are Not hARTs. The uThers were hARTs.*

LoVe from

CoBweb XX.



There is no record of a response from Amanda. Cobweb could obviously do joined script if he felt under pressure. He later claimed not to remember any of this.

Moth's next letter was very long, written in purple on hedgehog-themed notepaper.

Dear Miss Amanda,

We have been to the fair at Alderley Edge. It is a big fairy gathering evry yur when day and knight are equal ~~ekw~~ =. It wa wundurfull. I ment to send yu hour dress pattns last thyme but I for got. So hear they are. Thay took Peasblossom ages to maek. I thort Columbine's wos ded posh. We haf to ware wot gose with hour naems. Akshlymyne wos pritty but I wanted pink and Peasblossom ses I'm ungreatfull but I'm not - I just wonted pink and I bet there are so pink moths somwear and if not I'll spell . sum day so their. The boys wor tiet soots. Harlequin's woz black and wite and Cobweb's woz silver gray. The little ones doant g. They stayed with

Fox. Peasblossom says u can keep the pattns. Tell me aboutt yoar fair dress.

We stayed in a big tree with some garden fairies from Nether Alderley. Even the royal family kame from Tara. Most fairies don't lyke crossing warter - it does things to magic - but the royals are verry magic indeed. Their woz the titania and the oberon - they always ge5 calld that. Thees ones were Ivy and Beetle before thay got crownd. They fetched sum princes and princesses and the puck hoo tells them wot to doo.

We stayed up . morning to watch the wild hunt set out. It was very eggsiting. I don't know what they hunt. Columbine ses wild bore and Harlequin ses just squirrels and Peasblossom ses they don't youshly catch anything but oh Miss Amanda thay lookd wundurfull.

We danced at the fairy ring. Columbine danced with Prince Eglantine. She sed he was boaring. Sum flours fell out of Lady Veronica Speedwell's hair wile she was dansing and she let me keep them so u can have . .Doo u lyke dansing?

I got this hedgepig paper at the fair. Miss Amanda there are hedgepigs in yor garden. Thay sleep in the winter but now it's spring Harlequin can spell them awayk when he can bee botherd. Columbine ses u call them hedgehogs bu we like the old name best.

I played hide and seek with the Nether Alderley girls and Princess Andolindamina. We hid last yur's acorns and looked for mushrooms but we fownd a grumpy hedgepig who didn't want to wayk up yet so we didn't tell Harlequin. Cobweb played marbl with Prince Witch Hazel and he wun sow he had to giv me the marbul and it is a royal one!!! Fox has hiddn it :: me. What games do you play? Are yor toys :: playing? Do u win them?

We went on a speshal toor of the old mynes under Alderley Edge. Thay are very danjrus and we had to tayk willow the wisp fairies to guyd us.

When the fairy ring was over I swappt my dress for a fairing for u. It is a wissle. The goblins sed it wud blow good luck but I don't know. Goblins are tricky. There good luck mite just be good wether.

It is too big for me to blow. I hoap u like it. I bet it surprizes Doug and Sandy. Miss Amanda, Don and Sam are noyzee.

I am waring my lucky necklace orl the thyme Miss Amanda and Fox has hidden my dolfins

I doant think the tooth fairy turns teeth into money. She takes the teeth and leaves the money to pay. I no becos at the fair I saw sum wory beeds and the notiss sed

Genyuin humun teef

thay were pritty but I like my necklace best.

Columbine wonts to sea the baby horse but I doant. I think it mite kick.

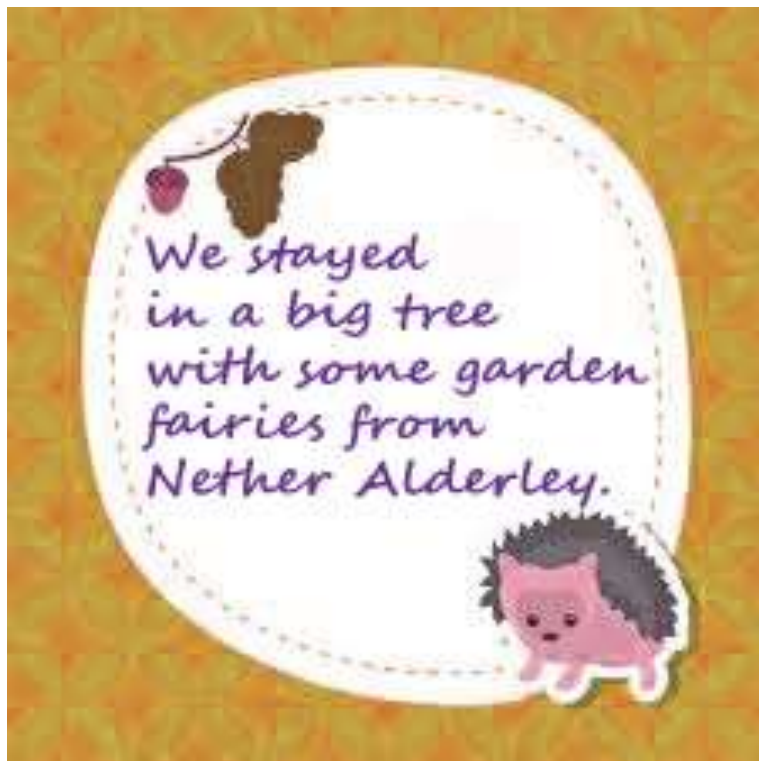
I would like a birthday but Peasblosssom ses fairies donat hav them - we just have the fair and evereebdy is a yur older.

We don't lyke swimming I toald yu about warter and magic. But Peasblosssom swopt her dress for honey and fetched sum hoam for the litte ones. They liked it, Miss Amanda, but they got verrry sticky. Fox lickt them but they were still sticky so they had to goe in the lake and they kame owt cleen. Now Willow ses he can swim but I don't think so - I think he just got washt.

I hoap you doant get tired reeding this long long letter but I had to tell yu abowt the fair before I ::got. Fairies forget a lot.

Peasblosssom ses it's thyme to go to my trea so Ill hav t poast this tomorrow.

Love from Moth (and every.).



It seems likely the willow the wisp fairy guides were Alderley Edge local fae with palm lights. The whistle was quite small and would have been fine for Moth; she was just being both generous and untruthful. It is also unlikely that Willow claimed to be able to swim but the honey part of the story is probably true. There were post scripts on the back of the envelope, which was addressed in very decorative script with twirls and flourishes.

P.S. We have been lerning the fanci riting on the frunt. And we have been spelling daffodils a lot.

PPS My pen matchs yor nu pakt!

The new packet was a purple greaseproof bag - presumably Amanda thought it would make a good waterproof envelope.

Later.

Amanda sent an Easter card with rabbits, eggs and lollipops on it. She reverted to print but used pencil again. On the envelope she wrote:

Dear Moth p.s.I done a surprise for you inside. The enclosure was a spell sheet, artificially aged (with cold tea?) and scattered with sequins and a white feather.



Inside the card:

Dear Moth thankyou for that very long letter last time it didn't take me that long to read it thanks for the presents as well. Last time I had a lot of trouble writing that letter because it was so long. Ohand guess what I got on Friday I got a little fairy wind chine it is very nice I picked one for you It is in the garden maybe you will Spot it. You know my cousin Andrew he said he spotted you in my front garden did he really or didn't you see him? It has been very bad the weather forecast hasn't it lately. I liked your dresses that you wore. I have a lot of money so I will give you some of it. Know it is the Easter Holidays of school it's brilliant. At Easter we get Easter Eggs from the Easter bunny Love From Am.



On the spell sheet, which was also in pencil, Amanda had used joined up writing again.

Dear Moth and friends I have done some fairy spells for you underneath

Happy Spell

Work Well Spell

Happy am I.

I will work well.

Happy am I.

I will work ~~riet~~ well.

Happy am I.

I am the daughter of work.

I will always

Please may I work well.

be happy.

1. close your eyes *1. Get a cup of water and say*

hold a flower in *the spell in a quite place*
as

your right hand *you say the last line put*

*whisper the Spell. some water on your
head.*

*Love From Amanda*XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Almost immediately, there was another envelope in Cobweb's unmistakeably scruffy print. It was a pink envelope again with an Easter stick-on greeting on it. It said, (as well as 'Miss Amanda only', and 'Privut'): KEEP OUT. Inside was a letter on the music notepaper, written in leaky black felt-tip, and a poem, in immaculate hand printing.

Dear Miss Amanda

I roat you a poam but the riting woodn't cum nice so Harlequin spell'd it :: me so it's sort of a joynd effort and yore lucky koz he dasn't doo much spelling, and it's still on my payper and Miss Amanda, I roat it, sow hear it is with love from me (Cobweb)



The poem was written in pencil on very thin airmail paper (with no decorations).

Hunting the Fairy

*If you are half outside just at the time evening turns to night,
If you look sideways between the crowded bushes or through each leaf,
If you creep softly under the stream or over the early stars,
You might see me.*

*If you look backwards round a window at midnight,
If you listen through the keyhole after bedtime,
If you shout quietly with the others who are fast asleep,
You might hear me.*

*If you set a mousetrap under the stairs baited with honey,
If you dig a hole in the pond and colour it pink,
If you tie two twigs together into a triangle above the trees,
You might catch me.*

*But if you creep into the garden on tiptoe, searching the flowers,
Or leave crates in the dew and the shadows ready for small occupants,
Or even capture on one of your picture boxes the gate where I'm swinging,
I won't be there.*

(It seems likely that Harlequin wrote the poem, Cobweb laboriously copied it out so that he could claim to have written it himself and Harlequin then spelled it to be legible.)

And Moth's reply to Amanda's letter arrived in luminous green on hedgehog notepaper.

Dear Miss Amanda,

Thank u :: the bewtiffle card. We doant ever give lollypopps two rabbyts - it mayks them stikki. And Miss Amanda, thay never giv us eggs I think u got that rong. Fox ocaay aka sumthymes gets eggs but he dusn't giv them : uss. I doant no abowt yore foxus. And thank u :: the shiney thing. Peasblossom is using it for a mirror but she ceeps seeying sumbodee elsuz fayce on . siyd and a foxy thing on the other. And we scrubd and scrubd but thay woan't kum off! I got the fether off the spell payper but the whether is woremer so I don't rayly need it so I gayv it bak to the hens in cayse they werr missing it.

Miss Amanda u ar very clever. The happy spell works. I held a dandelion. I didnt no peeples cud mayk up spelling. But I doant no if the work spell works, Miss Amanda. We play, we spel, we learn, we dancebut we never work. Work mayks magic less (like warter). So I doant think that spell wud work eniway.

Wee no Andrew and we have scene him from thyme to thyme. But if he has scene us wee doant no. He mite have ~~imag~~ ~~img~~ scene us in his hed.

Miss Amanda what hav u orl dun? Their ar a lot of peeples and a lot of noys. It was : hard to sleep so we had to moov trees. Farther up the streem and furthur down the bank. And we woan't visit the frunt garden any mor - just the nice . at the bak.

I lyke this thyme of yer. There is a lot of blossom. And Willow spelled his furst spell - pussy willow of course. I can spell blossom - lotts.

Miss Amanda, what is money?

Luv from evreebdy and

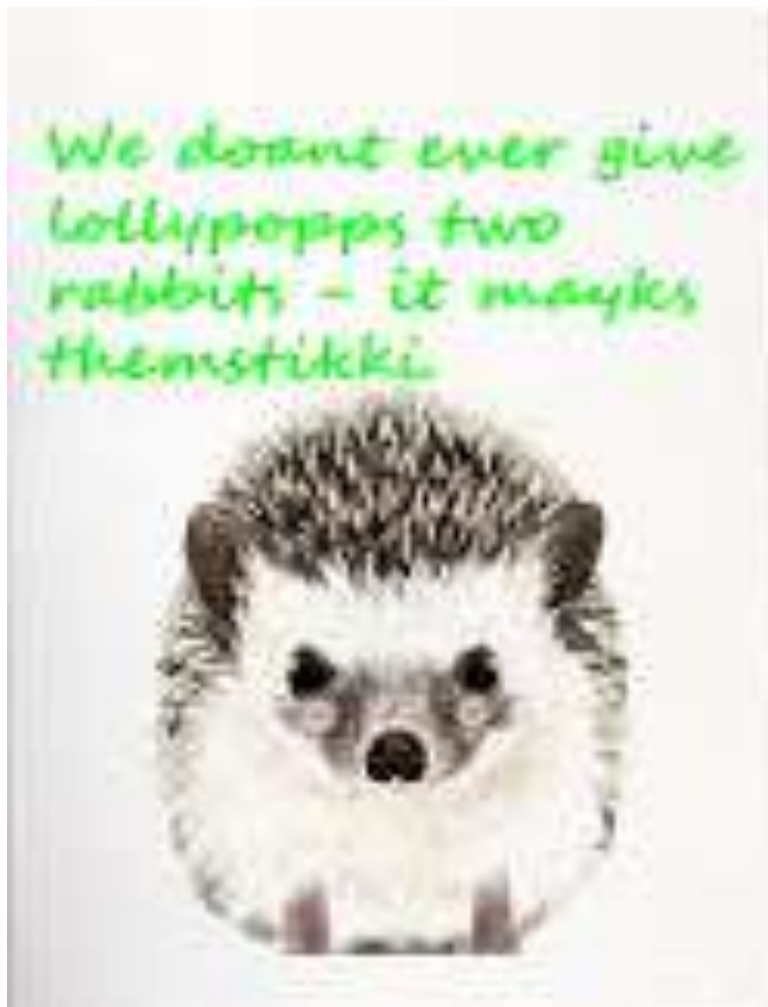
Moth

P.S. So doant put letters at the frunt

PPS. Leev the petuls in the rapper or thay will fall tobits.

On the envelope was:

The seeds are from Harlequin and he sez to plant them, but he's a sloppi speller sow thay mite not gro!!



There were no seeds or petals with the letter so Amanda may well have planted the seeds and perhaps scattered the petals.

Her next letter was on deep pink sugar paper and contained a drawing of Cinderella with some blue tissue stuck on as a dress. It was in pink pen.....and in print again. The effect of the pink *on pink* will have to be imagined.

Dear Moth and friends

The shiney thing that is used by a mirror by you is called a coin you know like you trade but we by with theese coins to get things.

Well we have made a shop and just they are lots of people I hate it because my Mum and Dad are working there and I have to stay in my house.

School

My teacher is called Mrs Singleton. She shouts a lot. My best friend is called Maisie. She is dead nice.

Lots of Love from Amanda

p.s. You might have a fairy Queen

Moth's reply came in blue ink on hedgehog paper. It's possible she had begun to appreciate the conventions of using contrasting script, whatever the background.

Dear Miss Amanda,

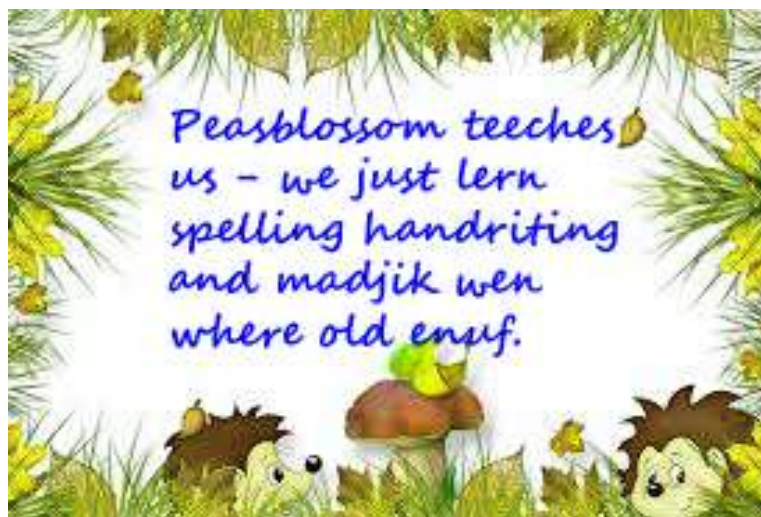
We fownd anuther coyn. It didunt skrub up very well but ennyway we doant nead : so yu can have it and maybe trayd it :: sumtning more yusfull. The goblin market duzunt tayk coyns.

Peasblossom teeche us - we just lern fairy spelling, handriting, and madjik wen where old enuf. Cobweb sez he scent u a poam - I hoap u cud reed it. His writing iz orful - he duzunt try. Miss Amanda, pink pen on pink paper is verry hard to reed. So plees doant.

Willow and Briony have sent u there ~~crok~~ ~~crok~~ ali gate or. Thay ust to ryde on it but now there : big. They wontud to swap it :: hunny but we wudunt let them - u no wy! My best frend just now is Chive from G cross. We choaz her az hour May qween and crown her with daisee chanes. But she likes hoarses - like Columbine - and she keeps going up Werneth Low to look for them so I doant always play with her. I never look for hoarses if I can help it. I like watsching the fish - speshly when their iz a whole moon. You wud like Chive but she is verry shy of big peeple and sez I am kwite mad to rite to yu. But we luv u Miss Amanda.

Love from Moth and everibody

PS On this coyn the foxi thing is hyding behind a lady on a by sikkle. Why?



Coins appear to have been rather a mystery to both girls. It's unlikely the goblins would refuse coins though they might not know their true value. The alligator might have been some kind of small ornament and was probably never even noticed by the twins.

Amanda's next letter came in pencil on white paper. She was printing again.

Dear Moth and Friends

Thank you for the poem it was very nice oh and to tell you how much I like your handwriting it is very neat. On Sunday I went swimming with my Dad. I have been wondering about what your tree ~~was~~ is like in the Valley is it peaceful and quiet and do you dance with the woodland creatures? Do you love someone? Write back soon!

Lots of Love from

Amanda

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

p.s. do you know a fairy called Matilda? A friend at school says she gets fairy letters too from a fairy called Matilda.



The Ending.

Moth's final letter was devastating. It was written in purple pen on hedgehog paper.

Dear Miss Amanda,

This will be mi lasst lettre becoz doant kri butt bi the thyme u reed thiss wee wil bee gon. We r mooving toknight. It iz knot piecefull hear. And their r a lot ov noysi peepul at the uthr sighd ov ff ov the streem and Peasblossom sez wee never get a deecent daís sleep sow we haf to go or we mite fayd away. We luv u butt we r tired. We r going neerur Alderley Edge. Some fairies from up the hill will looc after your guarden and spell the flours but they doant do letters.

We never dans with Fox. I doant think he duz dansing. And hedgepigs wood be priccly. And rabbits r daft. We ushuullee dans with eech othre. When it iz moonlite. We never met a fairy corld Matilda and it dusn't sownd lyke a fairy name butt we cood be rong.

I am getting good at fairy spelling and soon I will not bee abul to spell anee ov yore werds. Then I cuduntrite proppully eneewai. We r sending sum luccy poshun. It sez drink me butt PLEZZ doant. I t iz not poysen butt it wood bee a waíst. We got the bottle from the goblins - I think it eust to be a peepl bottl :: sumthing. Now it haz poshun majíck by Peasblossom :: u. Turn the top :: X thenn put . dropp undur yore chin at bethyme and I hoap u hav good luc and good dreems. Their iz a lucci ladyberd to.

We will orlwais luv u Miss Amanda and we r still their - jusst not at the botum ov yore guardan ení moar. And if aníbodi sez we r not reel they are just jelus becoz u r speshul. Doant forget us Miss Amanda. Keep safe and luki and luvly.

Love from Moth, Cobweb, Willow, Briony, Columbine, Harlequin and Peasblossom.

P.S. I usd up all my stamps.

The post script is probably a reference to the stickers that sprinkled Moth's letters - saying things like greetings, good luck, etc. Moth's letters usually arrived through the letter box but without postage stamps.



Amanda was frantic and wrote straight back. She scribbled in pencil on the plain back of a remittance advice letter, obviously in haste...

A last minute letter for you

Dear Moth and Friends

I was sorry to hear about it but here is a sweet smelling potion for you last and only truly gift from me love Amanda oh p.s. please one day send me your address I'd love to know love Amanda XXXXXXXXXXXXX

There was a tiny perfume bottle (containing unscented clear liquid) enclosed.

please
one day
send me
your address

Moth must have seen the letter before she left as it was with the others. Presumably Fox was looking after them but he hadn't been seen for a while. Maybe the people at the shop frightened him away too.

Epilogue.

An odd thing happened later that year. Amanda and her cousins went on holiday to Wales. Unknown to anyone else, Amanda must have left a letter to whatever fairies lived near the holiday home where they stayed. At Christmas she received a card - a fairly normal Christmas card with a note inside. The note was in good handwriting and perfect spelling... For what it's worth, it's included in this collection. It may be a fake or an adult fairy like Peasblossom might have 'spelled' it for Amanda. We shall probably hear no more about it - that year the cousins were going to Centre Parks instead of Wales...



TO. AMANDA.

FROM. *The Fairies at the bottom of the Garden.*

Dear Amanda. Thank you for your lovely letter you left in our 'post box' at the bottom of the garden at 'Ty Gros'.

I have left you a note and a small gift covered up in the ground with leaves. I marked the spot with a stick.

I hope it will still be there when you go next on holiday to 'Ty Gros'. I hope Santa comes for you and that you and your family have a happy Xmas.

With Love from

The Fairies

At the time of writing nothing further had been heard of Moth and her family. But perhaps, having got a taste for writing to humans, she will try again and someone near Alderley Edge may find themselves the lucky recipient of Moth's inimitable letters.